VEGA ENDORSEMENT
OFFICIAL REPORT

The new version of Vega (7.6.0) was proposed for endorsement around mid January. After a few revisions, it was definitively delivered around mid May. One final version, with minimal adjustments from the previous one, was produced on July 2nd. It is identified by the build number 35.

The evaluation of the product was made following what is written in Appendix A of section C.04 (Endorsement of a software program), and particularly what is written in article A.2, which is a sort of driver for the whole endorsement process.

> Each author of a program that helps to manage a chess tournament can apply for the FIDE endorsement by submitting an FE-1 form *(see Annex-1)*.
>
> For an endorsement application to be considered, the program must be able to manage Swiss tournaments using the FIDE (Dutch) System *(see C.04.3)* or any other pairing systems approved by FIDE *(see C.04.4.1-3)*. The endorsement is given for the specific pairing systems (one or more). Any program asking for endorsement should provide (explicitly or implicitly) a **FIDE mode**, which should offer all the functionalities and services required by FIDE for a tournament-managing program to be endorsable *(see below)*.
>
> The program is to be endorsed in the FIDE mode.
>
> Moreover, it must provide the following services:
> - an English language interface
> - the capability to import and export files coded in the FIDE Data Exchange Format *(see A.3.1 and Annex-4)*
> - the public availability of a (free) pairings checker (FPC - see A.4)
> - the public availability of a (free) generator of simulated tournaments (RTG, see A.5), unless exempted by the System of Pairings and Programs Commission (SPPC)
> - the possibility to be checked in a controlled environment
> - the compliance with all the requirements presented in the Verification Check List *(see Annex-4)*
>
> *The applicant should consider that merely complying with all the aforementioned requirements is not enough to receive a FIDE endorsement.*
>
> The FIDE mode may also offer additional services or functionalities, provided that they are not explicitly prohibited by FIDE, on condition that those services and functionalities may not cause pairing mishaps for FIDE mode users.
>
> If, during the period of validity of the endorsement *(see A.8)*, a breach of the above conditions is reported to the SPPC, and verified by the Commission, the endorsement may be immediately suspended (pending further investigation) or permanently revoked. In the latter case, the program reverts to the status of a new program to endorse.

Let us examine Vega point-by-point.

Each author of a program that helps to manage a chess tournament can apply for the FIDE endorsement by submitting an FE-1 form *(see Annex-1)*.	An application was not sent, but for already endorsed programs it is not really necessary.

For an endorsement application to be considered, the program must be able to manage Swiss tournaments using the FIDE (Dutch) System *(see C.04.3)* or any other pairing systems approved by FIDE *(see C.04.4.1-3)*. The endorsement is given for the specific pairing systems (one or more).	**This** endorsement request is for the FIDE (Dutch) System, although Vega has also been endorsed for the Dubov System and is requesting the endorsement for the Burstein System.
Any program asking for endorsement should provide (explicitly or implicitly) a **FIDE mode**, which should offer all the functionalities and services required by FIDE for a tournament-managing program to be endorsable *(see below)*. The program is to be endorsed in the FIDE mode.	A FIDE mode is automatically provided after a standard installation *(more details later)*.
Moreover, it must provide the following services: • an English language interface	All the meaningful parts of the software present an English interface, including the manual *(more details later)*.
• the capability to import and export files coded in the FIDE Data Exchange Format *(see A.3.1 and Annex-4)*	Import/export work as requested *(more details later)*.
• the public availability of a (free) pairings checker (FPC - see A.4) • the public availability of a (free) generator of simulated tournaments (RTG, see A.5), unless exempted by the System of Pairings and Programs Commission (SPPC)	As Vega uses the JaVaFo pairing engine *(more details later)*, these services are provided through JaVaFo.
• the possibility to be checked in a controlled environment	By definition, when there is a program that can run on the user's machine, the environment is controlled.
• the compliance with all the requirements presented in the Verification Check List *(see Annex-4)*	The verification check-list will be thoroughly commented later.
The FIDE mode may also offer additional services or functionalities, provided that they are not explicitly prohibited by FIDE, on condition that those services and functionalities may not cause pairing mishaps for FIDE mode users.	Vega includes accelerated systems (different by Baku), manual introduction/modification of pairings, non-customizable use of non-standard scoring point systems, forbidden pairings *(more details later)*.

Verification Check-List (VCL)

01	the FIDE mode must be the default operating mode of the software	Check *(see above)*
02	it ought to be possible to enter the FIDE mode by a standard installation of the tournament manager, as well as by a standard invocation of the program	The installation of the program runs without particular problems (it just requests that there must a 32-bit Java Virtual Machine running on the computer). Vega enters automatically in a FIDE mode (not explicitly mentioned in the program, but described in the manual).

03	the default pairing system activated by a standard invocation must be the one for which the program is endorsed and it must be clearly specified - however, if the program is endorsed for more than one pairing system, the standard invocation should activate one of the systems for which the program is endorsed	By default, tournaments are created for the FIDE (Dutch) System. However the user can manually change the pairing system *(note: Vega has been endorsed also for the Dubov System, and is requesting to be endorsed for the Burstein System - it also includes other systems which are not FIDE endorsed).*
04	every pairing-related service available in the FIDE mode must show a correct behaviour	This is a wide area. Vega permits to use other accelerated systems. The test was to verify whether the behaviour was consistent with a user's expectations. Vega permits to introduce the pairings manually or to modify the ones already inserted. Some particular situations may be a bit complicate to manage (for instance: exclude paired players from the pairing), but nothing that a smart arbiter cannot solve. Vega permits to use different scoring point systems, but it is not customizable. In other words: only the systems defined in Vega -210, 310, 520, besides the standard- can be used; the pairing allocated bye can be win or draw. The scoring point system 3-2-1-0 (win, draw, loss, absence) is not provided. Vega permits to define forbidden pairings. It is unclear whether this is formally allowed, but the program works properly when they are present.
05	the FIDE mode must inhibit whatever functionalities or services that may be explicitly prohibited by FIDE	It is difficult to check whether something that should not be available, actually is - but the FIDE-mode testing didn't single out any dangerous situation.
06	the word FIDE cannot be used for any pairing-related service that is currently not endorsed by FIDE	Besides the default system (FIDE Dutch), other pairing systems (even non-FIDE ones) may be selected. However, the word FIDE is present only for the Dutch and Dubov systems.
07	all the pairings produced by the software must strictly adhere to the rules of the pairing system	As anticipated before, Vega uses JaVaFo as its pairing engine. This is not a 100% guarantee that the pairings are correct, but all the tests performed against other engines (particularly the one provided by *BieremaBoyzProgramming* and available at https://github.com/BieremaBoyzProgramming/bbpPairings) show that, at least until the moment of this report, no error has been found.
08	pairing must be done using pairing numbers, not ratings *(except for the Dubov System, of course)*	Properly done.
09	pairing numbers cannot be changed after the fourth round has been paired (accordingly to rule C.04.2.B.3)	The software doesn't prevent the user from proceding with this change, however it warns adequately the user that this is not allowed and the manual, properly referenced, explains why.
10	the acceleration systems defined in the FIDE handbook *(see C.04.5)* must be implemented	The Baku Acceleration Method (currently the only one described in the handbook) is correctly implemented. The option that activates it can be used only for 9+-round tournaments, with the standard scoring-point-system.

11	the program must offer the capability to correctly import a TRF (implementing version TRF16 is mandatory - implementing also version TRF06 is recommended)	The import of a TRF correctly rebuilds the results cross-table (also from TRF06 - within the limitations of this format). All "letters" codes (i.e. W, D, L, F, H, Z, U) are read correctly. However, for other tournaments data (like value of the PAB, or the scoring point system), the import is not rigorous, but the manual allows the user to understand how to fix the possible problems.
12	the exporter in the TRF format (version TRF16) must be done in such a way that the output can be correctly analyzed by a pairing-checker, even when a different scoring point is used - it is recommended that such export is done using UTF-8 encoding	The output is done properly in TRF16 format, using the UTF-8 coding. The requested behaviour has been tested in tournaments with 3-1-0 or 5-2-0 scoring systems and/or when using a Draw for the scoring assigned to the pairing-allocated bye.
13	management of unusual results (like ½-0, 0-½ or an unforfeited 0-0) must be available; on the other hand, inconsistent scores (like 1-½ or 1-1) are not allowed	Vega provides a list of possible scores and only scores coming from this list can be entered. All of them are ok. Vega permits also to enter "quick" (or "unrated") scores, the ones that in the TRF are mapped with W, D and L codes.
14	possible forfeit results are only: 1F-0F, 0F-1F, 0F-0F - forfeit draws are not allowed	This is properly dealt with.
15	adjourned or postponed games (if allowed by the program) must be managed properly	A game can be marked as "adjourned". In this case, in the pairing phase, it is considered as a draw.
16	it must be possible to define the value (usually win or draw) for the pairing-allocated bye	This is properly dealt with *(except, as already said, during an import)*.
17	it must be possible to assign half-point byes; if the software allows the assignment of full-point byes: upon assignment, a warning must be issued, stating that this practice is deprecated by FIDE	This is properly dealt with. Half-point-byes can be assigned from the normal interface that deals with players absent from a round (single absence -i.e. zero-point-bye- or retirement). Then there is a special interface (with a weird name: _Modify Crosstable_) to change the value of the bye. With this special interface, it is possible to enter a full-point-bye and a warning indicates that is deprecated.
18	the program should make the official FIDE rating list readily available; or, failing that, it should offer adequate facilities for an arbiter that would like to use it	Vega can interact with many databases, including the ones distributed by FIDE. However, the user has to download them from the FIDE server and then create in Vega a reference to it.

The user-interface presents buttons that may be clickable, or check-boxes that may be flagged. Those controls are misleading, because they have no effect in FIDE mode.

The manual

It is the necessary companion of the English interface. The Vega manual is well prepared and everything that should be documented is satisfactorily described in plenty of detail.

CONCLUSION

Vega 7.6.0 deserves to be endorsed at the first available opportunity (88th FIDE Congress, scheduled in Göynük, October 7-14, 2017).

Until that time, the SPPC is recommended to issue an Interim Endorsement Certificate (IEC) for this version.
The IEC will allow Vega 7.6.0 (build 35 and up) to be immediately used in FIDE-rated tournaments *(of course, it does not make any sense to add:* even before July 1st*).*

Accordingly to the rule C.04.A.8.3, the IEC will be transformed at the Congress in an official endorsement, unless a formal complaint against the software is brought to the attention of the SPPC before the Congress itself.

This report is to be published on the pairings website, in the section dedicated to the IECs (i.e. http://pairings.fide.com/interim-endorsement-certificates.html).

Torino, July 3rd, 2017

(Roberto Ricca)